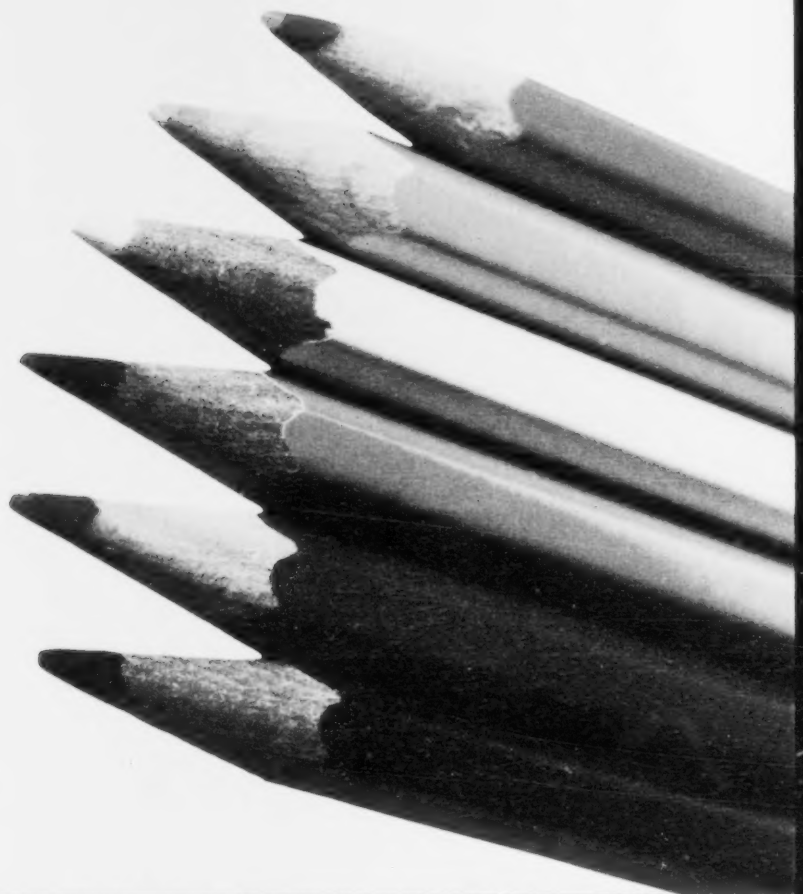
# Developing substance use and gambling policies for Alberta schools



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# Developing substance use and gambling policies for Alberta schools

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# Introduction

This guide was developed in direct response to requests from school principals and teachers who were looking for input and support in developing a school substance use and gambling policy. Schools can use the steps outlined in the guide to work through the policy development process.

The guide is intended as a reference, allowing individual schools to formulate and draft their own policies as they see fit. It discusses common concerns about developing a school policy, describes the key components of an effective policy, and provides information about relevant resources that schools can use. It is supplemented with a number of sample resources, such as a sample presentation for the people involved in policy development, a school policy template and sample communication releases for use after incidents related to substance use or gambling.

A substance use and gambling policy is one cornerstone in the foundation of a school where students feel safe and cared for, and where they learn lifelong skills to carry into adulthood.

One of the challenges schools face is creating a policy that is responsive to the individual needs of students. A substance use and gambling policy should be part of a comprehensive information, prevention and intervention strategy that is incorporated into the school's overall approach to promoting student health and well-being. This may include in-class activities on substance use and gambling; partnerships with community groups, allied professionals and parents; and student-led initiatives, such as alcohol-free events. Appendix A describes the elements of an effective school strategy.

AADAC's vision is a healthy society that is free from the harmful effects of alcohol, other drugs and gambling. AADAC believes that by working together, people can make a difference in the lives of young people. Everyone in the school environment (teachers, principals, school staff, students, parents and visitors) can work to create a social norm within the school where responsible citizenship is the expected behaviour. A substance use and gambling policy is one cornerstone in the foundation of a school where students feel safe and cared for, and where they learn lifelong skills to carry into adulthood.

Over the years, AADAC has worked with many schools to develop substance use and gambling policies. This guide was developed using current research and AADAC's experience in Alberta schools. Working through this guide will enable schools to

- identify the benefits of implementing the policy
- gain commitment from the community to develop the policy
- recognize how AADAC and others in the community can help in the policy development process
- be aware of issues that may arise when developing a policy
- complete the key components of the policy

- learn ways to communicate implementation of the policy
- create an evaluation plan for the policy
- make a commitment to regularly review and evaluate the policy

# SECTION 1:
# Rationale for developing a school policy

## Benefits of a school policy

There are noticeable benefits to implementing a school substance use and gambling policy. Having a well-defined and communicated policy helps in the following ways:

- It creates a positive learning environment by indicating to everyone in the school that substance use or gambling behaviour is not acceptable.
- It defines rules about the presence of prohibited substances or gambling behaviour on school property, and the consequences of violating the rules.
- It clarifies the school's expectations to students and parents.
- It enables principals, teachers and other school staff to speak with confidence about school values, behaviour expectations, procedures and legal responsibilities concerning substance use and gambling.
- It supports staff by providing clear procedures to follow when incidents of substance use or gambling behaviour occur.
- It clarifies what resources are available for students who are experiencing problems with substance use or gambling.
- It outlines a planned and coordinated response to substance use or gambling occurrences: this ensures proper use of community resources.

In 2002, the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) conducted The Alberta Youth Experience Survey (TAYES). The survey provided valuable information about what is happening with youth substance use and gambling in Alberta, and important risk and protective factors associated with it. This and other research shows that participation in extra-curricular activities, positive relationships between youth and adults in the school setting, and high social and academic expectations are critical factors in preventing youth from developing substance use or gambling problems (AADAC, 2003a, pp. 22-23). There is also a significant correlation between students abusing substances and dropping out of school before Grade 10 (AADAC, 2003a, p. 17). This information supports the need for a clearly communicated school position on substance use and gambling and emphasizes the significant role of the school in prevention.

## How AADAC can help

For over 50 years, AADAC has supported Albertans in building the capacity to overcome substance abuse and gambling problems. The goal of prevention in

AADAC is to prevent the development and reduce the harms associated with alcohol, tobacco, other drug and gambling problems.

Programs for children and youth are an essential component of AADAC's integrated system of addictions services. AADAC has a successful history of working collaboratively with Alberta Learning, educators, parents and students across the province to deliver specialized services that reflect the needs of communities and the experience of children and youth.

AADAC's work in schools is designed to provide teachers and students with curriculum-aligned resources that focus on building healthy, addiction-free futures. The goal is to enhance addiction information, prevention and intervention services for youth in schools through in-classroom, out-of-classroom and community activities; web-based information (www.aadac.com); lesson plans for teachers (http://teacher.aadac.com/); information for parents (http://parent.aadac.com/); and access to treatment for youth who are experiencing problems with alcohol, tobacco, other drugs or gambling. Together, Alberta schools and AADAC can help students discover and extend their own capabilities and develop supportive relationships and healthy environments.

Together, Alberta schools and AADAC can help students discover and extend their own capabilities and develop supportive relationships and healthy environments.

AADAC's work in schools currently focuses on key transition points where the right information or program, delivered when it is most relevant to youth, can have the greatest influence. Our work is based on principles of comprehensiveness, collaboration, youth involvement, best practices in prevention, acknowledgment of people who influence youth, an understanding of the importance of supportive environments and recognition that youth have the capacity to manage their own lives.

In addition to this guide, AADAC staff are available to support schools in developing a substance use and gambling policy. For more information, contact your local AADAC office (listed under the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission in the telephone directory).

## Prevention best practices: Understanding school culture

The concept of risk and protective factors is helpful in understanding the choices that young people make about involvement with activities like gambling and addictive substances like alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Research has discovered that certain features in a young person's life decrease the chances of harmful involvement. These features, called protective factors, include developing good social skills, participating in positive social activities, feeling connected to school, having friends who positively influence decision-making and having parents who monitor their children's behaviour (AADAC, 2003a). Likewise, there are risk factors that increase the chances of harmful involvement. Examples of risk factors are becoming involved with alcohol,

tobacco, other drugs and gambling at an early age; having friends who use or encourage use; belonging to a family with a history of substance abuse; experiencing conflict within the family; and having a poor connection to school (AADAC, 2003a). Risk and protective factors also increase or decrease the likelihood of other problems, such as dropping out of school or coming into conflict with the law.

Risk factors are life events and experiences that are associated with problem behaviour such as dropping out of school, breaking the law or using substances. Protective factors increase a young person's chances of becoming a healthy, productive adult in spite of difficult circumstances.

While there has been no research on the effects of a school substance use and gambling policy on youth, research has been done on how youth are affected by the norms or laws of a community. One of the known risk factors for young people developing substance abuse is having community norms or laws that favour substance use (Robins, 1984). It can be assumed that having norms or laws that oppose substance use and gambling, in the form of a school policy, would decrease the likelihood of youth engaging in these behaviours. It also seems reasonable that school environment has a significant relationship with substance use and gambling: when the environment is positive and students feel connected to school, substance use goes down; and when substance use increases, the school environment is negatively affected.

Feeling disconnected from school, being unsuccessful at school and showing signs of leaving school early put young people at risk of developing substance abuse. Positive relationships between students and adults in schools help minimize these risk factors. When social support networks are enhanced in schools, student grades increase and behaviour problems, including drug use, decrease. Adults can foster positive relationships with students by providing a caring and supportive school environment, accepting where students are developmentally, and appreciating the individual needs of students (AADAC, 2003a, pp. 17, 21, 22).

Best practices in prevention indicate that to be successful, prevention programs should be

- based on accurate information
- comprehensive and of sufficient duration
- delivered at a time when the content is relevant to students and anticipates important life transitions
- focused on the strengths and skills of people
- designed to teach and give opportunities for practising life skills (e.g., good decision-making) (AADAC, 2002a, pp. 25-28)

Successful prevention programs should be delivered during allocated curriculum time and taught in a sequential and cumulative manner by teachers who have access to good information and support materials (AADAC, n.d.). It is also necessary for prevention messages to be consistent, a point that must be considered when guest speakers deliver presentations on substance use or gambling. (Appendix B lists other questions to consider with regard to guest speakers.)

A school policy that heralds a preventative approach alongside an early response disciplinary model will improve the range of options for effectively dealing with substance use and gambling issues in schools. The type of policy AADAC suggests as a best practice provides opportunities to work within Alberta Learning's program of studies for Health and Life Skills Kindergarten to Grade Nine Guide to Implementation or Career and Life Management Guide to Implementation. AADAC has developed resources that support the program of studies and meet the needs of teachers and students. Schools interested in AADAC resources can contact their local AADAC office, call 1-866-33AADAC or visit the website at www.aadac.com.

# SECTION II:
# Steps for creating a school policy

This is an eight-step approach to guide schools in developing, implementing and evaluating a substance use and gambling policy. Using these eight steps as a reference provides a comprehensive and strategic approach that draws upon the strengths of the school.

The working committee should consist of people from various groups in the school community, each playing a unique role and having different concerns.

## STEP 1: Gain commitment from the school community

The first step in policy development is bringing people together to form a working committee. A group facilitator should be appointed to arrange meetings and make sure that the work of writing the policy is completed. The facilitator can also lead the working committee in defining the purpose, outcome and time frame of the policy development process (AADAC, 2003b, p. 5).

The policy affects everyone in the school community, which includes principals, teachers, other school staff, allied professionals, students, parents, school visitors and local neighbours. The working committee should consist of people from various groups in the school community, each playing a unique role and having different concerns. This ensures that the policy represents the entire school community, reflects the values of the school, attends to a range of concerns and secures support for established guidelines. Appendix C describes several groups in the school community to consider involving on the working committee. Appendix D provides a sample working committee presentation. It suggests ways to present important information and initiate discussion for the people invited to participate in policy development.

Working committee members should be informed of the time required to develop and implement the policy. Another essential step that requires a commitment of time is the evaluation process, which involves ongoing review and assessment of policy outcomes. A sub-committee may be appointed to conduct the evaluation.

## STEP 2: Complete a needs assessment

An effective policy is written in a clear and consistent manner, is specific to substance use and gambling, meets the needs of the individual school and students, and can be adapted to fit unique situations. Research shows that teachers and principals support adopting an approach to discipline issues that is tailored to each school and responsive to the needs of individual students (Shannon and McCall, n.d).

Once the core members of the working committee are established, the first few meetings should focus on completing a needs assessment. The purpose

of a needs assessment is to identify the experiences and needs of students, as well as the needs and wants of people in the school community, which will determine what goes into the policy. These are some of the possible sources of information:

1. **Interviews with people** – Participants are asked a set of questions to determine information and facts, personal experiences or opinions. The interviews can be held over the phone or in person.
2. **Focus groups** – A small group of six to eight people is invited to an informal meeting. A facilitator will ask open-ended questions and allow for further discussion.
3. **Surveys** – Questions are sent in the mail, handed out or asked over the phone to a large group of people. The questions are usually short, with a list of answers for participants to choose from.
4. **Public forums** – Everyone in the community is invited to attend a presentation. Participants are given the opportunity to ask questions and give opinions or ideas about what to do.
5. **Existing information** – Data can be gathered from the police, and from medical and demographic studies related to substance use or gambling. The Alberta Youth Experience Survey (TAYES) 2002 summary report contains current information about youth substance use and gambling in Alberta (AADAC, 2002b, pp. 33-39).

It is imperative to have the school board review the policy for legal reasons, and to ensure that everyone affected has heard about the policy and has the chance to read it.

A suggested process for gathering information is to observe students, communicate with them and other members of the school community (through interviews, focus groups, surveys or public forums), inquire about services available in the community and review information that is already available. Appendix E can be used as a checklist to determine what sources of information will be used in the needs assessment.

## STEP 3: Understand legal obligations

There may be concerns that the legality of the policy will be challenged. The courts have indicated that when a school policy is well publicized, with everyone in the school aware of policy expectations and consequences, the policy has greater legal standing (Gaustad, 1993, p. 3). Therefore, it is imperative to have the school board review the policy for legal reasons, and to ensure that everyone affected has heard about the policy and has the chance to read it. Best practice recommends that schools create a procedure for regular evaluation, to ensure the policy has sound legal standing.

Legal issues include the following:

### 1. Determining when search and seizure are permissible

Search and seizure is a measure that involves ethical questions for the school community. A balance must be struck between respecting the rights of an individual student and protecting people in the school from a potentially harmful situation. A principal can discuss search and seizure with the school

board and a police representative. According to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, "Everyone has the right to be secure against unreasonable search and seizure." It is important to understand the protocols for search and seizure, which are covered in the Alberta Learning publication Supporting Safe, Secure and Caring Schools in Alberta (Alberta Learning, 1999).

### 2. Dealing with students under the influence of alcohol and other drugs

The policy should provide detailed procedures to help staff deal with students who arrive at school under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Best practice in this situation is to contact parents or guardians to take responsibility for their child, to arrange for medical or police intervention, or to request assistance from Children's Services. It is unacceptable to ask intoxicated students to leave school grounds, as they may be a risk to themselves or others.

### 3. Reporting student alcohol or drug use to the police

Schools have a responsibility to inform police services when a student is using or selling alcohol or other drugs. The procedure for alerting police services is most effective when it is developed in partnership with a police services representative.

### 4. Referring students for counselling

It is important for schools to advocate counselling for students who are at risk of developing substance use or gambling problems. In Alberta, students cannot be forced to attend counselling by denying them access to education; however, counselling can be offered as an option for an earlier return to school after a suspension.

Youth are assured confidentiality when they receive counselling at AADAC. Appendix F summarizes AADAC's principles of confidentiality, which are in accordance with the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Act. Contact your local AADAC office to inquire about individual and family counselling.

Provincial Acts that are relevant to school policy development include the following:

Gaming and Liquor Act (R.S.A. 2000)
Prevention of Youth Tobacco Use Act (R.S.A. 2000)
Prevention of Youth Tobacco Use Amendment Act (S.A. 2004)
School Act (R.S.A. 2000)
School Amendment Act (S.A. 2004)
Full versions of the provincial Acts are available at http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca/catalogue/ or through the Alberta Queen's Printer.

The relevant federal Acts are as follows:

Canadian Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (1996)
Youth Criminal Justice Act (2000)
Full versions of the federal Acts are available at http://laws.justice.gc.ca or through the federal Department of Justice.

## STEP 4: Ensure that intervention strategies are in place

Schools may have professional staff, such as school counsellors, who are trained to intervene with students who are at risk of developing substance use or gambling problems. They can help improve in-school expertise by providing training for other staff members and making links to community resources with specialized services for youth.

Programs for youth are an essential part of the information, prevention and treatment services that AADAC provides to Albertans. Schools are encouraged to work with AADAC to develop a referral system that ensures students receive timely support. AADAC staff can help schools set up a student assistance program for youth who have substance use or gambling problems, or have family members with problems. Such a program involves creating a team of school staff and allied professionals to identify, refer and intervene with students who are at risk of developing substance use or gambling problems. The team would provide counselling services or refer students to an outside agency, and support students returning to school after completing treatment programs.

Schools are encouraged to work with AADAC to develop a referral system that ensures students receive timely support.

Appendix G is a checklist for identifying students who are at risk; it describes which student behaviours to monitor. Appendix H lists AADAC's services for youth, available free of charge.

## STEP 5: Agree on the content of the school policy

The School Drug Education Project and the Drug and Alcohol Office in Western Australia identify guidelines for developing a school drug policy that are also useful in a Canadian context. AADAC supports the guidelines recommended to deal with drug-related issues, while recognizing the need to comply with Alberta legislation, the policies of Alberta Learning, and any other regulations and policies that apply in each school jurisdiction.

Appendix I lists the essential components of a comprehensive policy, adapted from the guidelines developed by the School Drug Education Project and the Drug and Alcohol Office in Western Australia. Working committees can use Appendix I to define each policy component, according to the needs of dividual school communities. Space is also provided to record approval dates, ensuring that authorization is obtained at each step of the development process.

Clear guidelines help everyone in the school know what is expected of them and what they can expect from others. The policy must apply to everyone on school property, including staff, students and visitors, and must clearly define consequences of policy violations. These consequences have to be appropriate and fall within the protocols established by the school district. When establishing consequences for policy violations, it is important to consider the following points:

- Violations must be taken seriously from the very first violation.
- Consequences must be implemented immediately.
- Consequences must be applied fairly and consistently.
- Consequences must be reasonable for the school to implement.
- Consequences must comply with the school code of conduct and discipline policy.
- Consequences must be feasible for the school to implement. (AADAC, 2003b, p. 7)

Clear guidelines help everyone in the school know what is expected of them and what they can expect from others.

## STEP 6: Write the school policy

The School Drug Education Project proposes a sample school policy, which AADAC has adapted in Appendix J. This sample can be used as a framework to write a comprehensive policy. The policy can also be prepared using the school policy components (Appendix I), information collected by completing the needs assessment, and relevant material taken from meeting minutes. Schools may hire a consultant or appoint one or two members of the working committee to write the policy.

The policy can be prepared using the school policy components, information collected by completing the needs assessment, and relevant material taken from meeting minutes.

Once the policy has been drafted, it is helpful to schedule a working committee meeting, solely to discuss the written policy. Distribute the draft one week before the meeting to allow committee members to prepare feedback to discuss at the meeting. The writers can then compose a second draft based on the feedback received. The working committee should also set a deadline for the completion of the final draft and agree how to determine when the policy is ready for implementation. For example, the working committee may decide that it is the principal's responsibility to approve the policy for implementation.

## STEP 7: Create an effective communication plan for the school policy

An effective communication plan informs everyone in the school community about the policy.

An effective communication plan informs everyone in the school community about the policy: who was involved in developing the policy, when it will be implemented, what it includes and to whom any questions or concerns can be directed. You may also want to inform people where they can go if they need help with a substance use or gambling problem.

It can be helpful to announce that the policy will be developed before the process begins, to allow the school community to feel informed and included, and to give community members the chance to be involved on the working committee. Policy announcements can also be scheduled throughout the year to inform new members (and remind existing members) of the school community about the policy. Other ideas for an effective communication plan are as follows:

- Introduce the policy at the beginning of the school year, during meetings with parents and students.
- Put the policy in student and staff handbooks.
- Include reminders about the policy in regular communications to parents, such as school newsletters.
- Post a copy of the policy for all members of the school community to read.
- Promote the policy, consider issuing a press release about the policy and provide a contact person. (AADAC, 2003b, p. 9)

### Strategies for public relations

Maintaining positive public relations is an effective way to connect the school with the community. Schools may devise a public relations strategy to inform the community about the policy. This strategy should define guidelines for public relations, which must reflect the relevant school board protocol. Here are some suggestions for developing a public relations strategy:

- Designate one person as the public relations contact and use this name on any written communication about the policy.
- Provide written statements to the community.
- Confirm statements with the working committee before releasing them to the community.
- Promote positive events through public relations.

Appendix K has communication samples that may assist schools in reporting issues of concern to the school community.

## STEP 8: Evaluate the school policy

It is important to develop an evaluation plan before the policy is implemented. The evaluation plan should clarify what will be measured and how the implementation of the policy will be monitored. The working committee can ensure that the policy remains relevant by

- scheduling regular evaluations
- appointing someone to conduct the evaluations
- stipulating that evaluations should include input from various groups in the school community (principals, teachers, other school staff, allied professionals, students, parents, school visitors and local neighbours)
- consulting with the school board and inviting a school board representative to participate in the evaluations

The kind of evaluation the school conducts can be a process evaluation, an outcome evaluation, or a combination of both:

- A process evaluation will assess how well the policy was developed and delivered.
- An outcome evaluation will assess the extent to which the intended goals and outcomes of the policy have been met.

A combined evaluation will assess how well the policy was developed and delivered and whether intended goals and outcomes were met. It will also identify ways to improve the policy and its implementation.

The evaluation plan should clarify what will be measured and how the implementation of the policy will be monitored.

### Questions to take into account for the evaluation

- Are members of the school community aware of the policy?
- Is the policy having the desired effect?
- How many violations of the policy have occurred and what were the circumstances?
- Are there opportunities to introduce additional programs or resources that might help reduce the number of policy violations?
- Are there problems the policy does not address?
- Are the procedures in the policy realistic?
- Does the policy need to be revised in response to new trends or concerns, or to changes in student behaviour or school culture?
- What was the feedback from those using the policy?

## Conclusion

This guide has presented the steps involved in developing a school policy. If the decision has been made to proceed with developing a policy, the school is moving towards creating or enhancing a positive environment where staff and students are free from the harmful effects of substance use and gambling. The school accomplishes the following:

- recognizing the benefits of having a policy
- understanding how a policy is a part of a comprehensive information, prevention, and intervention strategy
- acknowledging that AADAC and other community groups can assist in policy development
- building commitment in the school community
- dealing with substance use and gambling issues
- communicating the implementation of the policy to the school community
- developing an evaluation plan for the policy
- ensuring that the policy continues to meet the needs of the school community by re-evaluating and revising the policy regularly

Once the policy is in place, the school should take pride in creating a substance- and gambling-free environment that promotes health. It is essential to celebrate and sustain a strong, positive profile. A comprehensive school approach is responsive to the individual needs of students, creates partnerships with community groups and organizes substance use and gambling prevention activities, and enhances the physical, emotional and social well-being of everyone in the school community. An important step is acknowledging, and conveying to the school community, the positive outcomes the school is working to achieve in undertaking policy development.

Once the policy is in place, the school should take pride in creating a substance- and gambling-free environment that promotes health.

# APPENDIX A: Elements of an effective school strategy

An effective school strategy is appealing, comprehensive, research-based, asset-building, multi-layered and collaborative.

## Appealing

Programs and resources that are creative and have a positive focus appeal to children and youth. Including students in the development and implementation of a school strategy is one important way of ensuring that they take ownership of the program and participate with enthusiasm.

## Comprehensive

A comprehensive approach involves a variety of community partners, advocates consistency among schools, and ensures a continuum of services, including information, prevention, harm reduction and intervention strategies.

## Research-based

A school strategy should be based on research on the experiences of Alberta youth, and on a thorough review of best practice in the field of school-based addictions prevention and intervention.

## Asset-building

It is important to emphasize the positive assets of children and youth and help them to build their capacity to manage their own lives. Asset-building goes beyond education about alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and gambling; it involves reducing the risk factors for young people and enhancing their protective factors.

## Multi-layered

A school strategy provides teachers and students with a range of resources that include

- in-class learning activities that are grade-appropriate and aligned with the Alberta Learning curriculum
- out-of-class learning activities that enhance the overall school environment and promote resilience
- role models and mentors who offer students their time, support and experience to build on personal strengths and learning opportunities

- information that helps parents and teachers to understand their role in addictions prevention
- consultation with addictions specialists to facilitate the development of policies and practices that deal with students at risk of developing substance use or gambling problems
- demonstration projects that are examples of exceptional approaches to prevention, early intervention and harm reduction for children and youth
- information and awareness programs that reach students, parents and teachers and increase their understanding of important issues
- web-based information that is relevant, comprehensive and readable and includes interactive content for students, parents and teachers
- treatment support from addictions specialists that includes referral to smoking cessation programs and addictions counselling

## Collaborative

Schools make a valuable difference for students when they work together with other schools, parents, government agencies, community organizations, police services, children and youth. A collaborative approach recognizes the importance of people who influence young lives and connects everyone involved to pass on their expertise. This enables schools to develop common goals and implement consistent school-based addictions services, which increases the number of youth being reached and achieves greater benefits for Alberta students.

# APPENDIX B: Guest speaker checklist

Inviting a guest speaker to discuss substance use or gambling (at working committee meetings or student events) can have a positive impact. However, it is necessary to select guest speakers carefully, because by inviting them, the school is endorsing the messages they promote. It is helpful to complete the following checklist, prior to inviting a guest speaker to talk about substance use or gambling:

- The school board has approved the guest speaker.
- The guest speaker has provided a detailed outline about the topics the presentation will cover.
- The guest speaker's presentation is consistent with the school's information, prevention and intervention strategy.
- The presentation will not be an isolated experience but is part of a larger school strategy.
- The guest speaker has provided positive references from other schools or organizations.
- The guest speaker has the appropriate training, experience and background to give a well-informed and unbiased presentation.

If you would like assistance in selecting guest speakers, contact your local AADAC office.

# APPENDIX C: Groups in the school community

The following groups should be considered for inclusion on the working committee.

**School board representatives** are responsible for governing education and school activities in their district, which includes setting up formal agreements with community agencies, such as police services. They should be involved in any discussions about services that support a school substance use and gambling policy. Once the school board has authorized a proposal to develop the policy, a school board representative should be requested to take on a leadership role with the working committee.

**The working committee** can ask the school district representative to present information on expulsion and suspension, school district discipline, and where available, other documentation related to incidents of substance use and gambling behaviour in the school district.

**Principals** contribute to the policy initiatives of the school board and provide leadership in their schools. They are responsible for student and staff well-being, as well as engaging parents and other community members in various programs. It is essential for a principal to be directly involved with the working committee. This communicates to the school that substance use and gambling are important issues and that the policy will be enforced.

**Teachers** play a critical role in the successful implementation of the policy. Teachers observe student behaviour almost daily and may be able to identify a student who has a substance use or gambling problem, or is at risk for developing one. Participating on the working committee allows teachers to communicate their concerns, recommend effective implementation strategies and share a commitment to making the policy work.

**School counsellors** consult with school staff, parents and students about various issues, and often lead school-wide initiatives related to student health and well-being. Where appropriate, they refer students to community resources (e.g., AADAC). Counsellors act as student advocates and should be included on the working committee.

**Other school staff** (e.g., caretakers, administrative staff, teacher assistants and lunchroom assistants) have unique perspectives on student behaviour. They often develop relationships with students and promote a caring and supportive school environment. It is important to give all school staff the opportunity to participate on the working committee.

**Police services** are often well positioned to provide the school with information about local trends in drug use and laws that relate to alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and gambling. It is beneficial to have the support of police services and the involvement of a police officer on the working committee.

**AADAC** can assist with the development, implementation and evaluation of the policy. AADAC's work in schools is built on a tradition of leadership in delivering credible and specialized services to youth. AADAC can provide information about

- working with youth on substance use and gambling issues
- drug use trends
- best practices in prevention, intervention and treatment
- counselling services in support of the policy, once it is implemented

**Allied professionals** to consider inviting to working committee meetings are

- family liaison workers
- family and community support services
- public health nurses
- mental health workers
- youth justice committees
- probation officers
- bus drivers

**Students** have insight into the behaviour of their peers and can offer creative solutions for dealing with substance use and gambling issues. They are more likely to accept a policy that they are involved in developing. Representatives of the student population should be given the opportunity to join the working committee and influence policy content by expressing their needs, concerns and suggestions.

**Parents or guardians** can make a significant contribution to the success of the policy. The National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in the United States has researched school involvement and found that "student behaviour such as alcohol use, violence, and antisocial behaviour tend to decrease as parent involvement increases" (National PTA, 2000, p. 13). The working committee should include parents from different sub-groups, rather than representatives from one group, such as the school council. It is also effective to encourage involvement by personally inviting parents, perhaps by a phone call from a teacher or a committee member. This is more compelling than sending an open invitation through school council or a newsletter. Because many working parents have a difficult time meeting during school hours, the working committee should consider holding evening meetings or looking for other ways to involve parents (e.g., conducting telephone interviews to seek parent feedback about suggested policy components).

**Other community agencies and groups** may be interested in joining the working committee to develop the policy. During the first committee meeting, it is worthwhile to do an environmental scan. This involves identifying what community groups (including government and non-government service

providers and other agencies currently working in the community) can contribute to policy development. Once they have been identified, representatives from these groups can be invited to the next meeting. It is necessary to involve committee members as early as possible. This ensures that everyone feels valued, that important insights are gathered at an opportune time, and that issues are not repeated each time a new member joins.

**Local neighbours and businesses** can provide valuable input as well. They may want to sponsor a school prevention initiative; or they may be affected by student behaviour off school property, such as smoking in the community.

# APPENDIX D: Working committee presentation

## 1. Introductions

Invite participants to introduce themselves and provide a brief description of their interest in the policy development process. Introduce any guest speakers present (e.g., representatives from the school staff, AADAC or police services).

## 2. Background information

It may be helpful to provide some background information about why youth become involved with gambling or use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs, and about the risk and protective factors that affect the likelihood of harmful involvement.

### Why do youth gamble or use alcohol, tobacco or other drugs?

- out of curiosity
- to escape
- to build confidence
- to increase energy
- to cope with emotional or physical pain
- because of peer influence
- for fun
- to be "cool" (i.e., to be popular, accepted or admired)
- to gain a competitive edge
- to change their appearance (e.g., lose weight or gain muscle mass)

### Why is it important to include gambling in a school policy?

The Youth Gambling International website (McGill International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors) shows that youth with problem gambling behaviour

- are more likely to have lower self-esteem and higher rates of depression
- are at a higher risk for developing other addictions
- are more anxious and have trouble conforming to the norms of their society
- have difficulties practising self-discipline
- have poor general coping skills
- move quickly from social to problem gambling
- may have started gambling early (approximately age 10) with an early big win

### What are the risk and protective factors for youth substance use and gambling?

The Alberta Youth Experience Survey (TAYES) 2002 asked students about their gambling behaviour, use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, and other meaningful aspects of their lives. The survey identified important factors that put young people at risk of developing substance abuse and gambling problems, as well as factors that would protect or buffer students from developing substance abuse and gambling problems.

Risk factors increase the chances of harmful involvement with alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and gambling. They include

- becoming involved with alcohol, tobacco, other drugs or gambling at an early age
- having friends who use or encourage use
- belonging to a family with a history of substance abuse
- experiencing conflict within the family
- having a poor connection to school

Protective factors decrease the chances of harmful involvement with alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and gambling. They include

- having parents who monitor their children's behaviour
- developing good social skills
- having positive social activities available and participating in them
- getting high marks in school
- feeling connected to the school (AADAC, 2002b)

## 3. What can schools do to prevent substance use and gambling, and how can schools intervene when problems arise?

Explain how the working committee can create a comprehensive substance use and gambling prevention strategy through teaching the curriculum, developing a school policy and providing student support.

- A school staff member can discuss how relevant topics are covered in the school through the Alberta Learning program of studies for Health and Life Skills Kindergarten to Grade Nine Guide to Implementation or Career and Life Management Guide to Implementation.
- A working committee member can talk briefly about the policy development process and the benefits of implementation.
- A school counsellor or AADAC representative can provide information about the kinds of student support available in the community.

## 4. What do we include in our policy to make it successful?

Working committee members can break into small groups and discuss this question. When they have finished, each group can report to the large group. (Use Appendices H and I to introduce policy components and a sample policy, which will be discussed in detail in subsequent meetings.)

## 5. How do we identify the needs and wants of people in the school community?

Define a needs assessment and explain the importance of completing one. Present the different ways to get information (through interviews, focus groups, surveys or public forums). Have working committee members break into small groups to look at Appendix E and discuss what sources of information the needs assessment should use.

## 6. Closing

Have participants discuss their thoughts about the policy development process, by presenting one challenge and one benefit.

Set a time for the next meeting. Let participants know that the purpose of the next meeting will be to work on the needs assessment.

# APPENDIX E: Needs assessment checklist

Some information below can be obtained for the needs assessment. Check each piece of information that will be helpful for the school to use.

Name of School _____ Date _____

- ❍ the extent of student substance use and gambling behaviour
- ❍ student attitudes about substance use and gambling
- ❍ attitudes of others in the school community about substance use and gambling
- ❍ risk factors that increase the chances of harmful involvement with substance use and gambling (becoming involved with alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and gambling at an early age; having friends who use or encourage use; belonging to a family with a history of substance abuse; experiencing conflict within the family; and having a poor connection to school) (AADAC, 2002b)
- ❍ types of activities available to students in the school and community and other activities that could be offered
- ❍ student attitudes about the availability of activities
- ❍ community services available
- ❍ attitudes about the community services available
- ❍ the strengths, capacities and assets of the school community
- ❍ students who are at risk of developing substance use or gambling problems
- ❍ the purpose and expected outcomes of the policy
- ❍ procedures about intervention and discipline
- ❍ new programs to aid in planning
- ❍ existing programs to review, update or maintain
- ❍ the needs of students
- ❍ the needs of parents and families
- ❍ the needs of other people in the school community
- ❍ other (please identify) _____

(AADAC and Brewers Association of Canada, 2002, p. 33)

# APPENDIX F: Confidentiality guidelines

When students are referred to AADAC for counselling, they are assured confidentiality through the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Act. AADAC's Commission Board has authorized confidentiality principles, listed below. AADAC staff adhere to these principles when working with all clients, including students.

## Principles for Action

1. Confidentiality is the foundation of the client-counsellor relationship and must be protected to the greatest extent possible.
2. The client, subject to limited exception, has the fundamental right to decide the extent to which his or her personal information is given with others.
3. AADAC will obtain written consent prior to the disclosure of client information with other helping agencies or individuals unless there are compelling circumstances affecting anyone's health or safety or overriding legislation applies.
4. Services will be provided to clients with the understanding that AADAC may be required to disclose personal information as a result of other statutes including the Public Health Act, the Child Welfare Act, the Fatality Inquiries Act and the Protection for Persons in Care Act and that AADAC records may be subject to review at court proceedings.
5. AADAC acknowledges that specific, compelling circumstances affecting anyone's health or safety may develop where the limited disclosure of a client's otherwise confidential information may be necessary. In such circumstances, notice of the disclosure is mailed to the last known address of the client.

In all cases, the principles for action are adhered to in accordance with AADAC's Act, policy, and Guidelines on Client Confidentiality. (AADAC, 2001)

It is important to discuss issues of confidentiality with an AADAC contact. This enables the school to develop a process for referring students and maintaining confidentiality, with the mutual understanding of all involved.

# APPENDIX G: Identifying students at risk

(AADAC, 1995, pp. 65-66)

Student:_____ Date of referral:_____

Grade:_____ Birth date:_____

Teacher:_____ Course:_____

A classroom teacher may observe a number of behaviours, which could indicate a student is at risk of developing a substance use or gambling problem. Although these behaviours may identify a potential substance use or gambling problem, they may also point to an unrelated problem. This checklist should only be used as a screening tool to be aware of students who may be in need of help for a possible substance use or gambling problem. This checklist can also be used to start a discussion with a student and build a positive relationship with him or her, which is a starting point for gathering more information.

Check off behaviours that have been observed.

## Attendance

- ❍ is frequently absent
- ❍ is frequently late
- ❍ frequently attempts to be excused during class

## Performance

- ❍ has slipping grades
- ❍ hands assignments in late
- ❍ completes assignments poorly
- ❍ does not hand in assignments
- ❍ is unprepared for class
- ❍ has difficulty staying on task
- ❍ is working below potential
- ❍ has low motivation

## Attitude

- changes mood frequently (from day to day, hour to hour)
- is very defensive
- is argumentative
- has caused other students to be afraid of him or her

## Behaviour

- is disruptive in class
- is inattentive
- has difficulty following classroom routines
- is unco-operative with teachers
- is frequently or easily upset
- has memory lapses
- is critical of other students
- uses obscene language and gestures
- is withdrawn
- has changed friends recently
- vandalizes (suspected or actual)
- displays sexual behaviour towards peers or staff
- promises to do better but behaviour does not change
- denies any problems
- avoids contact with people who care

## Physical symptoms

- appears dazed or giddy
- is extremely lethargic
- has an unkempt appearance
- has glassy or bloodshot eyes, or dark circles under eyes
- shows poor coordination
- falls asleep in class
- shows changes in alertness
- has unexplained bruises
- is underweight
- is accident-prone

## Specific Concerns

- ❍ talks about problems at home
- ❍ talks freely about alcohol or drug use
- ❍ talks about gambling or debts

Specify additional concerns.

What actions have already been taken? (E.g., discussed concerns with student, contacted parents or guardians, enforced classroom consequences).

Check one.

- ❍ I give permission for the contents of this form to be disclosed to the student.
- ❍ The student may know that I made this referral, but the contents of this form are not to be disclosed.
- ❍ I request anonymity as the originator of this form.

# APPENDIX H: AADAC Services for Youth

(AADAC, 2002d, pp. 21-22)

## Information services

AADAC provides a wide array of print and web resources geared to youth, parents and teachers for the purpose of informing youth and their key influencers about substance use and gambling problems. These resources provide a balanced, evidence-based overview of addictions-related subjects, from information about specific drugs to suggestions for helping kids to grow up addiction-free. Youth, parents and teachers can learn more about these resources from their local AADAC office or by visiting the following websites:

- www.aadac.com
- www.aadac4kids.com (for kids)
- www.zoot2.com (for youth)
- http://parent.aadac.com/ (for parents)
- http://teacher.aadac.com/ (for teachers)

## 1-866-33-AADAC Help Line

The 1-866-332-2322 AADAC Help Line provides information, support and referral services for Albertans 24 hours a day.

## Prevention services

Prevention services are is available throughout the province at AADAC offices, clinics and Funded Agencies, and at the two youth service centres in Calgary and Edmonton. Services include community consultations, collaboration, professional training and education.

## Mobile/outreach services

Mobile service teams provide information, prevention and treatment services at key community sites across the province. The teams are situated in places where youth are at risk of developing alcohol, other drug or gambling problems, such as schools and sites where youth are involved with the justice system. All mobile sites provide short-term individual or group counselling, assessment and referral. Services are also offered to their families and to professionals who work with youth. AADAC has mobile service teams in Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, Red Deer, Slave Lake, High Prairie and Peace River.

## School-based services

AADAC provides schools with prevention and early intervention services through

- training programs for administrators, teachers and other school community members
- contributing to the development of school policies
- consulting and collaborating on school-based prevention and intervention initiatives
- providing curriculum-aligned resources and assisting teachers in the delivery of substance use and gambling programs

## Intensive Treatment

AADAC offers intensive day treatment for youth in Calgary and Edmonton, including family counselling, support groups and residential support.

## Outpatient Treatment

Outpatient counselling is available at AADAC offices, clinics and Funded Agencies throughout the province, and at the two youth service centres in Calgary and Edmonton.

AADAC supports the delivery of quality programming by skilled staff through ongoing professional development. This enables staff to effectively deliver innovative programming. A full list of AADAC and funded agency locations and contact information is available at www.aadac.com or by contacting your local AADAC office.

# APPENDIX I: School policy components

(Adapted with permission from the School Drug Education Project and the Drug and Alcohol Office, Western Australia)

| Policy component | School's definition | Approval date |
|---|---|---|
| **Rationale**<br>The rationale for the policy can include<br>• aims of the policy<br>• definitions of terms in the policy<br>• brief statements about how the policy relates to the school's overall approach to promoting student health and well-being<br>• a list of groups in the school community that the policy applies to<br>• a short description of how the policy was developed<br>• a schedule for reviewing the policy | | |
| **Prevention**<br>Write a description of the school's prevention strategy. The strategy should be incorporated into the school's overall approach to promoting student health and well-being. It may include<br>• a coordinated, integrated and sequential substance use and gambling education program that supports the Alberta Learning program of studies for Health and Life Skills Kindergarten to Grade Nine Guide to Implementation or Career and Life Management Guide to Implementation, and other curriculum requirements<br>• a needs assessment to determine the substance use- and gambling-related issues that are viewed by the school community to be of greatest importance (see Appendix E)<br>• identification of the staff members responsible for implementing and monitoring prevention initiatives<br>• information about how the school will provide substance use and gambling education programs and ensure that this component of the policy is reviewed regularly | | |

| Policy component | School's definition | Approval date |
|---|---|---|
| **Intervention**<br>Indicate when intervention will occur by defining the following:<br>• substance use or gambling behaviour that is unacceptable on school grounds<br>• procedures for dealing with substance use or gambling behaviour<br>• assistance that will be offered to students with substance use or gambling problems<br>• assistance that will be offered to students at risk of developing substance use or gambling problems<br>• other factors that will be considered in each individual case, such as the location of the incident, emotional state of the people involved and the personal circumstances of the student(s) involved<br>• the roles and responsibilities of members of the school community (principals, teachers, other school staff, allied professionals, students, parents, school visitors and local neighbours)<br>• legal issues that may arise, e.g., rights and responsibilities of those involved in questioning and in search and seizure | | |
| **Identification**<br>Describe how to identify alcohol, tobacco, other drug or gambling problems by having<br>• a training program for staff on identifying potential substance use or gambling problems<br>• a procedure for dealing with student disclosures of substance use or gambling problems<br>• a procedure for dealing with peer, parental or community reports of student substance use or gambling problems<br>• a procedure for dealing with students who are showing signs of intoxication<br>It is important to note that some medical conditions resemble intoxication. Emphasize the importance of ensuring that intoxication is the cause of unusual behaviour before further steps are taken. | | |

| Policy component | School's definition | Approval date |
|---|---|---|
| **Assistance and Referral**<br>Some schools have the resources to screen students and provide counselling for alcohol, tobacco, other drug and gambling problems, while other schools need support. For more information about appropriate screening techniques and tools, contact your local AADAC office. AADAC representatives may also be available to provide training to school staff. It is important to know confidentiality guidelines when offering assistance and referral, which are listed in Appendix F. | | |
| **Consequences**<br>Clearly state what constitutes a substance use or gambling offence and describe<br>• guidelines for short- and long-term consequences of behaviour that violates this policy<br>• the consequence for each action or generalized group of actions<br>• the consequence for a recurring violation<br>• the method of contact with parents<br>• provisions for continued study if a student is suspended | | |
| **Communication Plan**<br>Identify strategies for informing the community about the policy, such as<br>• having a poster campaign<br>• promoting positive events in newsletters<br>• providing parents with behaviour guidelines to be signed by students and parents<br>• providing handouts and discussion notes for parent-teacher conferences<br>The communication plan may include a public relations strategy to inform the community about the policy and promote events for student health and well-being. Ensure that the public relations strategy aligns with school board protocol. If a contact person has been assigned, all school staff should be aware of this. | | |

# APPENDIX J: Sample school policy template

(Adapted with permission from the School Drug Education Project and the Drug and Alcohol Office, Western Australia)

The following school policy is an example of what a substance use and gambling policy might include. It is intended as a tool to assist schools in developing their own policies that reflect unique school communities and cultures.

## Name of School

## Policy statement

Gambling and the possession, use and trafficking of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs are unacceptable and will not be tolerated on school property, on school buses or during school-related activities.

## Rationale

(NAME OF SCHOOL) is committed to promoting the health and well-being of all students and creating a learning environment where all students feel safe and cared for.

Alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and gambling are addictive, are harmful to the school community and threaten the health and well-being of students. (NAME OF SCHOOL) acknowledges that creating a healthy environment for the school community is everyone's responsibility. This policy is

- supportive of people trying to quit
- part of the school's broader substance use and gambling prevention strategy
- applied fairly to everyone
- consistent with district-wide policy

(NAME OF SCHOOL) has created a comprehensive prevention strategy that prohibits gambling and the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs on school grounds. The prevention strategy provides a framework for

- prevention of substance use and gambling problems
- intervention with students at risk of developing substance use or gambling problems
- identification, assessment and referral for student substance use and gambling problems

This policy was developed in consultation with principals, teachers, other school staff, allied professionals, students, parents and community members. It has been approved by the school board.

This policy will be reviewed every three years to ensure that it remains relevant and effective.

## Policy purpose and procedures

**AIM: To contribute to the prevention of gambling and substance use problems among (NAME OF SCHOOL) students.**

- Substance use and gambling prevention programs will be offered in the school in a coordinated, integrated and sequential manner. They will be based on the Alberta Learning program of studies for Health and Life Skills Kindergarten to Grade Nine Guide to Implementation or Career and Life Management Guide to Implementation.
- The rules about gambling and the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs will be clearly communicated to students by being posted in each classroom and included in students' school agenda books.
- Every three years, (NAME OF SCHOOL) will complete a needs assessment to determine which issues related to substance use and gambling are viewed by the school community to be of greatest importance.
- (NAME OF SCHOOL) will regularly communicate with the school community about the goals of the comprehensive substance use and gambling prevention strategy and the procedures for dealing with problems related to alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and gambling.
- The principal and school counsellor have leadership roles in implementing and monitoring prevention initiatives and procedures for dealing with substance use and gambling problems, and evaluating the policy as a whole.

**AIM: To create a safe and caring school environment, free from alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and gambling.**

(NAME OF SCHOOL) does not permit students to do the following while on school property, while on school buses or during school-related activities:

- use or possess tobacco products
- consume or possess alcohol
- inhale solvents
- use or possess pharmaceutical drugs for non-medical purposes
- use or possess illicit drugs

- use or possess drug-related equipment (syringes, bongs, pipes) unless intended for legitimate medical purposes
- gamble for money or items of value
- be in the presence of other individuals while those individuals are violating the school policy as listed in the seven points above

If a student is using pharmaceutical drugs for legitimate medical purposes, staff may contact parents for confirmation.

Staff and visitors are also prohibited from smoking while on school property.

### AIM: To identify the role of the school community in the prevention of alcohol, tobacco, other drug and gambling related problems.

If a student violates (NAME OF SCHOOL)'s policy, the following actions will be taken:

- A school staff member will respond to students' immediate safety and medical needs.
- The school principal will validate the facts of the incident by interviewing relevant staff and students. Any alcohol, tobacco or other drugs involved will be confiscated and properly managed until they can be disposed of or turned over to the police.
- Parents or guardians will be contacted and informed of the situation. If appropriate, parents or guardians will be asked to pick their child up from the school. If a parent or guardian is unavailable, a school staff member will phone an emergency contact, local law enforcement or Children's Services.

### AIM: To determine the consequences of incidents involving substance use or gambling

Use of tobacco products on school property will result in the following:

- If a student is found using tobacco products, such as cigarettes or spit tobacco, the student's parents or guardians will be notified and a letter will be sent home.
- If another incident of tobacco use occurs, the school police liaison officer will be contacted and the student will be charged under the Prevention of Youth Tobacco Use Amendment Act and receive a fine of $100.00.
- Repeated offences will also result in fines. The student will be offered a referral to a tobacco cessation program.
- If the student fails to respond to repeated fines and a referral to a tobacco cessation program, the student will be suspended under the guidelines in the School Act.

Use or possession of alcohol, or deliberate inhalation of solvents, will result in the following:

- The student's parents or guardians will be notified and a letter will be sent home.
- The student will face disciplinary action including possible suspension or expulsion, as outlined in the guidelines provided in the School Act.
- The student and his or her family will be referred to counselling services.

Use of illicit drugs and non-medical use of pharmaceuticals will result in the following:

- The school principal will search the student and his or her locker.
- The school principal will determine if the police are to be contacted.
- The student's parents or guardians will be contacted and a letter will be sent home.
- If the police are contacted, they may choose to press formal charges against the student.
- The student will face disciplinary action including possible suspension or expulsion, as outlined in the guidelines provided in the School Act.
- If illicit drugs are confiscated, the police will be contacted to obtain the drugs as evidence or dispose of them.
- The student and his or her family will be referred to counselling services.

**AIM: To provide intervention and support for students who are experiencing substance use and gambling problems.**

### *Student tribunal*

If a student wishes to avoid going through the traditional disciplinary process, he or she can opt to participate in a student tribunal. In a student tribunal, a group of the student's peers (who have been trained in peer mediation and conflict resolution) hears evidence and a statement from the student about the incident. They make recommendations on disciplinary actions and acts of restitution (e.g., community service projects).

### *Identification of drug-related problems*

(NAME OF SCHOOL) believes that it is in students' best interests to have substance use and gambling problems identified as early as possible. The following measures have been put in place:

- All staff members will attend a workshop on the identification of problems related to alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and gambling.

- If a staff member believes that a student is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, he or she is to contact the school administration immediately for assistance.
- If a staff member believes that a student is experiencing a substance use problem, but the student is not suspected of being intoxicated at the time, the staff member can contact the school counsellor for assistance.

### *Assistance and referral*

If a school staff member has reason to believe that a student is dealing with a substance use or gambling problem, the staff member can refer the student to a school counsellor for screening. If the student is identified with a potential substance use or gambling problem, he or she will be referred for further counselling.

# APPENDIX K: Communication releases

(Adapted with permission from the School Drug Education Project and the Drug and Alcohol Office, Western Australia)

## Sample statement to staff

On (INSERT DATE), an incident involving (*INSERT NAME OF DRUG OR GAMBLING ACTIVITY) was brought to the attention of the school administration. This incident is being dealt with in accordance with the policy on substance use and gambling that was developed by the school community. The policy takes into account the relevant legal issues, the student's situation and the impact on the school community.

(INSERT NAME OF RELEVANT STAFF MEMBER) is responsible for managing the incident on behalf of the school and (INSERT NAME OF RELEVANT STAFF MEMBER) will be providing support for the families, school staff and students involved. If you have any questions or concerns about the incident or who is managing the incident, please direct them to (INSERT NAME OF RELEVANT STAFF MEMBER).

Gambling or the possession or use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs is not permitted on school grounds except where parental or guardian consent is given for the use of legal medication, supported by medical advice. School staff who observe such behaviour should refer to the School Substance Use and Gambling Policy.

## Sample statement to parents

On (INSERT DATE), an incident involving (*INSERT NAME OF DRUG OR GAMBLING ACTIVITY) was brought to the attention of the school administration. This incident is being dealt with in accordance with the School Substance Use and Gambling Policy that was developed by the school community.

The School Substance Use and Gambling Policy states that gambling or possession or use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs is not allowed on school grounds unless parental or guardian consent has been given for the use of legal medication, supported by medical advice. Any such incident will be handled in accordance with the School Substance Use and Gambling Policy. The policy focuses on the relevant legal issues, the student's situation and the impact on the school community. Further information on the policy can be provided by (INSERT NAME OF RELEVANT STAFF MEMBER).

## Sample statement to students

On (INSERT DATE), an incident involving (*INSERT NAME OF DRUG OR GAMBLING ACTIVITY) was brought to the attention of the school administration. This incident is being

dealt with in accordance with the School Substance Use and Gambling Policy that was developed by the school community.

Gambling or the possession or use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs is not permitted on school grounds unless parents or guardians have given permission for the student to have legal medication.

*Insert general facts that are relevant to each specific incident but avoid use of identifying information.

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